

Involuntary Commitment First Examiner Frequently Asked Questions

What is a commitment examiner?

A physician, an eligible psychologist, **or any health professional or mental health professional** who is **certified under [NCGS 122C-263.1](#)** to perform the first examination for involuntary commitment described in [NCGS 122C-263\(c\)](#) or [NCGS 122C-283\(c\)](#).

Who is eligible to become a commitment examiner?

Professionals eligible to become commitment examiners effective October 1, 2019

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Master's level *Licensed* Clinical Addictions Specialist (LCAS)
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)*
- Physician's Assistant (PA)*
- Master's or higher-level degree *Nurse Practitioner* (NP)**

***Professional groups newly eligible effective October 1, 2019**

****Formerly only Masters Level Psychiatric nurses**

SOURCE: [NCGS 122C-263.1](#)

Do Physicians and eligible psychologist have to take the training?

No, Physicians and eligible psychologists do not have to take the training.

Will it be at the discretion of the MCO as to who they will allow to take the exam?

No, effective October 1, 2019 the waiver process under previous law will be replaced by a direct process through DHHS. This process begins with a web-based License Verification Form (LVF) completed by the applicant. The LVF will be available on the DMH/DD/SAS website.

How do I gain access to the training and the exam?

Effective October 1, 2019- The on-line exam will be available on the 1st & 2nd and 15th & 16th of each month, with exception of October 2019 when the test will only be available the 15th and 16th.

Effective October 1, 2019, the fee schedule will be:

- Initial certification test \$100
- Recertification- \$60

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With the addition of LPC's to the list of professionals who can perform psychiatric first exams beginnings October 1, 2019, will dually licensed LCAS/LPCs currently certified to perform substance use first exams need to go through the certification process to be able to perform first exams as an LPC?

Currently certified LCAS/LPCs will not have to take the new training to perform first exams under a valid LPC License. However, currently certified LCAS examiners will still need to complete the Licensure Verification Form with their LPC information and wait for confirmation from the DMH Lead before conducting Mental Health First Examinations as an LPC. All current Commitment Examiners will be responsible for reviewing and understanding the changes to the IVC Law as a result of SB630.

Will currently certified commitment examiners have to take the exam again before their 3-year refresher is due?

No, current certified commitment examiners will not be required to take the exam again until it is the examiner's time for recertification. However, all current Commitment Examiners will be responsible for reviewing and understanding the changes to the IVC Law as a result of SB630.

Will applicants still have a year from passing the exam to complete the 3 supervised examinations and then have the applicant's supervisor send a letter to the DMH Lead attesting to the applicant's competence?

No. The timeframe has changed from 12 months to 6 months. The applicants will now have 6 months to complete the 3 supervised examinations and have the applicant's supervisor submit the letter to the DMH Lead using the IVCCommunication@dhhs.nc.gov email address.

Will I still be restricted to a limited LME/MCO catchment areas as a commitment examiner? Can I perform first level evaluations statewide if I am on the list?

If a person is certified as a commitment examiner after October 1, they will be able to perform the evaluation wherever they are employed so long as the employer permits it. Regardless of payor source. If they have a contract with the LME/MCO to provide first evaluation services, that contract will govern.

If I evaluate a client over tele psych in another county, can I submit paperwork for an IVC in the county the client is currently in?

Yes, you can file a petition in the county where the Respondent is located. Jurisdiction for a petition for IVC can be where the respondent resides or is found. [NCGS 122C-261\(a\)](#)

What are the new changes to the training curriculum, exam and program?

The training is comprised of a variety of web-based learning modules managed by Southern Regional AHEC beginning October 1, 2019.

The certification exam will now be administered through a secured web-based portal.

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How will current First Commitment Examiners know about any changes to the training program? When will the changes be effective? Will there be a webinar or another memo to explain the changes?

Information about the First Level Commitment Examiners training program will be posted to the DMH/DD/SAS website. Please check the website frequently.

What is the health screening and how does it apply to the first level commitment evaluations?

According to [NCGS 122C-3\(16a\)](#) *An **appropriate screening** suitable for the symptoms presented and with the capability of the entity, including the ancillary services routinely available to the entity, **to determine whether or not an emergency medical condition exists.***

Are commitment examiners required to do the health screening?

According to [NCGS 122C-263\(a1\)](#) *A health screening shall be completed, **conducted by a first commitment examiner or other individual** who is determined by the area facility, contracted facility, or other location to be **qualified to perform the health screening** and in conjunction with the first examination.*